

*The early Conversion of Islanders a wise
Expedient for propagating Christianity.*

S E R M O N

Preached before the
Incorporated SOCIETY
FOR THE
Propagation of the Gospel in
Foreign Parts;
AT THEIR
ANNIVERSARY MEETING
IN THE
Parish-Church of St. Mary-le-Bow;
On Friday the 19th of Feb. 1713-14.

By GEORGE STANHOPE, D. D. Dean of
Canterbury, and Chaplain in Ordinary to
Her MAJESTY.

⊕ SS
L O N D O N:

Printed and Sold by J. Downing in Bartholomew-
Close near West-Smithfield, 1714.

February 19. 1713.

At the Anniversary Meeting of the Society,

Agreed that the Thanks of this Society be given to the Reverend the Dean of *Canterbury*, for his Sermon preached this Day before the Society; And that he be desired to print the same.

W. Taylor, Secretary.



Isaiah lx. v. 9.

Surely the Isles shall wait for me, and the Ships of Tarshish first, to bring thy Sons from far, their Silver and their Gold with them, unto the Name of the Lord thy God, and to the Holy one of Israel, because he hath glorified thee.

WHatever Views this Prophecy might have, of any Events peculiar to the Jewish Nation; The glorious Increase, and future Fulness of the Christian Church, have generally been thought the main Intention of it. Hence the Spiritual *Jerusalem* is, by a beautiful Figure, *Ver. 4, 5:* called upon, to look out, and see her Children crowding to her, from every Quarter of the habitable World: And hence this Chapter makes a part of the Service for that solemn Festival, which thankfully commemorates the first Manifestation of our Blessed Lord to the *Gentiles*. That plentiful Accession is promised here, in Terms figurative and lofty; suited, as was necessary, to the Capacities of that Age and Nation; but by no means to be confined within the literal and most obvious Sense of the Words. The bringing in of *Midian* and *Sheba*, *Kedar* and *Nebaioth*, would *Ver. 6, 7:* give great Ideas of a Church, extended to the utmost Bounds of their Trade upon the Continent; And so would the *Islands* and *Ships of Tarshish*, to Men, whose Skill in Navigation ran so low; and whose boldest Voyages were little more, than so many Coastings from Port to Port. But We, on whom my Text hath already been accomplished; And who are now assembled, in a holy

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Hope of seeing its farther Completion, in the still dark and far more distant Corners of the Earth, are taught, by happy Experience, to enlarge its meaning. The Propagation of the Gospel throughout all the then known World; Nay, the setting up Christ's Kingdom in new, and (for many Centuries after this Prediction was uttered) yet undiscovered Worlds, is certainly the Mercy intended by the God, who inspired it. And to This Event, Great and Wonderful as it is, We are not excluded from the Honour of contributing somewhat, by our pious and charitable Endeavours, however, in themselves, poor and disproportionate to so noble and god-like a Design.

God, who made the World, and is Lord
Acts xviii. of Heaven and Earth, hath (as St. Paul
24, 26, 27. observed to the Athenians,) made of one
Blood all Nations of Men, for to dwell on
all the Face of the Earth; and hath determined the
Times before appointed, and the Bounds of their Habitation; that they should seek the Lord, if happily they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us. Now there is not perhaps any Instance more wonderful, in all the Works of that Providence, which disposes Events here below; than the Appointment of particular happy Seasons, and Methods, for manifesting his Truth to the ignorant part of Mankind. The Men of Leisure and Abilities for such an Undertaking, could not, I conceive, entertain Themselves, or the Publick, more delightfully, more profitably; than by just and careful Observations, upon the different Methods of conveying Religion to Mankind; the Degrees, by which it sprung up; and the most memorable Incidents, which have conduced to its Growth and Flourishing, in the different Nations and Climates of the Now, or at any time heretofore, Christian World. At present I enter no farther

ther into this Speculation, than only to put you in Mind of One Thing, which is abundantly notorious. I mean, that the mutual Interchange, set on foot between Countries remote from each other, for the sake of Traffick and Temporal Convenience, hath all along been one great Instrument of imparting useful Knowledge, where it was wanted. This was the Case of Learning and Philosophy, among the Ancients: This the Case of Arts and Sciences in every Age: This in part hath been, and will, we trust, be more and more, the Case of our most Holy Faith. And the Prophet here justifies us in that Trust, by laying so particular a Stress upon *The Isles waiting for Christ, and the Ships of Tarshish first bringing Sons from afar, to the Name of the Lord, and to that Church, which the Holy One of Israel hath glorified.*

By this time you perceive, not only the Occasion and Scope of the Text, but also the Use I intend to make of it. Which is, to serve the pious Purposes of this Assembly.

I. *First*, By a few short Remarks upon the Words themselves: And then,

II. *Secondly*, By such an Application of These, as may be agreeable, both to the Duty I am now performing, and to the Character of that Body, who have called me to it.

I. I begin with some Remarks upon the Words themselves.

1. To the *first* of which the Situation of our own Country does, in especial manner, bespeak our Attention. For, from that Clause, *Surely the Isles shall wait for me*: I would beg you to observe with me, the great Wisdom and Goodness of God, in making such Countries as This, early Partakers of his blessed Gospel.

The Miracles, which confirm'd the Doctrine of our Lord, and the Prophecies which had, so many Ages before, not only foretold its Success in general, but pointed out the very Places, where it should remarkably succeed; were manifestly the Effects of an infinite Wisdom and Power, acting above, and beside, the established Order of Causes and Effects. But, altho' Many such extraordinary Operations were necessary; yet we are not to imagine, that Every Step taken in this great Work, was miraculous, and out of the common way. At Other times God magnified himself, by rendring Nature serviceable to his Design; by suiting the Distributions of this Knowledge, to the Circumstances and Dispositions of Men; and by making Them the Objects of his Choice, who, humanly speaking, were in better Capacity, either to consider and receive it themselves; or most proper, when received, for Communicating it to Others.

Now these Two Advantages seem to Me very naturally to have accrued to the Christian Faith, by the early Conversion of Islanders. *First*, That it might reasonably expect as good Entertainment among Such, And then, *Secondly*, That it was as likely to be spread abroad by Such, as by any sort of People whatsoever.

1. *First*, The Inhabitants of the Isles may, humanly speaking, be thought at least equally disposed to *receive* the Truths of the Gospel. Because the greater Convictions of Natural Religion any Men are under, the better Preparation they seem to be in, to hearken to God's Reveal'd Will, when it shall be discovered, and duly attested to them.

It was upon this Foundation, that St. Paul
 Acts xiv. began to build the Conversion of the
 v. 15, 16, Men of *Lystra*; when putting them in
 17. remembrance of that regular and beneficial Providence, which gives Rain from Heaven,
 and

and fruitful Seasons, so filling our Hearts with Food and Gladness. This he calls *God's Witness of himself*, common to all Mankind; And, as his Works of Mercy are more amply and evidently exhibited to Some Parts of the World, than to Others; So the Arguments, drawn from the Creation and Government of the Universe, tho' they may not always in Fact attain to proportionably greater, yet do they seem, when urged upon Such, to promise more Efficacy and greater Success.

Now, What can be more manifest, than that, besides those common to Mankind in general, there are some Wonders and Advantages of this kind, peculiar to Countries, of like Situation with our Own? For, Is it not so, to stand surrounded with a liquid Wall, partly in, and partly out of the Water, like so many distinct Worlds? Is it not so, to be secured against Insults, and sudden Invasions from abroad; and especially, from That, which one would apprehend to be the nearest and most formidable Enemy? The Sea, which girds us in, and roars around us, and swells above our Coast; as if collecting all its Forces, and saving us from other Devastations, only to pour in, and have the swallowing of us up it self? And, to render our Preservation yet more strange, What is it, that repels the continual Efforts of this encroaching Neighbour? Not Rocks or Castles, not Mounds or Moles; These frequently prove Fortifications too feeble. No; 'tis something in appearance weaker, but in effect much more impregnable, to which our Safety is owing. Even a poor despised bed of Sand, which conquers by not resisting. Such are the Bars and Doors, set to guard our Dwelling; and so loudly does every Shore proclaim that to us, which to Job, who dwelt upon the Continent, God spoke by himself; that it is He who does, He alone who

Job
xxxviii.v.
1, 10, 11.

can, say to the Sea, *Hitherto shalt thou come, but no farther; and here shall thy proud Waves be stayed.*

But to proceed. Those various *Works of the Lord*, and *his Wonders in the Deep*, familiar to such Nations; The perpetual but regular Revolutions of Tides, which have so long exercis'd the nicest and most sagacious Philosophers; The Uncertainties of Wind and Weather, which seem dispens'd to such, in a much more arbitrary manner; Those Riches and Treasures of God, of which the great and wide Sea, as well as the Earth, is full; The Advantages of foreign Conversation and Improvements, to which the necessity of Trade whets the Ingenuity and Industry of such Countries; And many such like Helps to Natural Religion, are awakening Demonstrations, that the Lord
 Psal. *is King*; And that, *as the whole Earth,*
 xcvi. *so the Multitude of the Isles in particu-*
 v. 1. *lar manner, may be sensible and glad*
thereof.

If then a deeper Insight into, and clearer Conviction of, Natural Religion be, in proportion, a better Preparation to embrace Revealed Religion: And if the Beauties of a Creation and Providence Divine, be set before Islanders, in greater Variety, and a stronger Light, than before many other parts of Mankind: Then, though the Prophecy, as worded in my Text, that *the Isles shall wait for Christ*, should not directly intend thus much; (which yet perhaps it may) you allow I hope however, that the Reason of the thing will bear me out, in esteeming it One eminent Instance of the Divine Wisdom, that God should so early discover himself to those Islands by his Word, to whom he had discovered himself by his Works, so signally before.

2. But, Was it for Their Sakes only, that this Method hath been taken? No certainly. For I
 offer'd,

offer'd, as a *Second Motive* to it, that thus the Gospel might find a quicker Communication, and was more likely to be spread abroad by Such, than by any other sort of People whatsoever.

Of many good Effects, which would naturally follow, from the mutual Dependence, not only of private Persons, and Neighbourhoods of less extent, but even of whole Countries and Quarters of the World, upon each other, One ought to be the Enlargement of our Charity. Be the Strangers, with whom we correspond for supply of our own Necessities, of Birth and Climate never so remote; common Humanity obliges us to do good, where we receive Good; and some way to serve Them, of whom we take such care to serve our selves.

But will the furnishing Them with Necessaries in return, suffice for that purpose? Vending the Commodities of home-growth, easing our Land of unprofitable Plenty, and giving little in value to receive more; These are what no Heathen, no Publican will refuse. If then we Import to Them, from whom we hope to Export, what thank have we? The Civilized and the Barbarian Trader are thus far upon an equal Foot: And the most griping Usurers, the most shameless Extortioners, will give to Usurers and Extortioners, in prospect of the like, or a growing Profit again.

Our Commerce therefore does not commence truly Christian, till it proceeds upon a Principle of Charity. Of Charity to All, but especially to the Spiritual, Wants of them, to whom we apply for the Increase of our Temporal Comforts. A Charity, that labours to enrich them with Wisdom, as much better and more useful, than that which it was formerly the greatest Glory of Navigation to transport; as our Improvements in Sailing have enabled us to carry it farther; Or rather, a Treasure of Wisdom, which admits of no Comparison.

Oh!

Oh ! Were our Zeal for importing this, proportioned to the Richness and Usefulness of the Commodity ; Were it agreeable to that Scheme, and to those Principles of doing Good, which the Gospel hath exalted to so high a Degree of Perfection ; Did it bear any tolerable Resemblance to the Spirit, and the Practice, of the Primitive Christians : Our ignorant and barbarous Chapmen would quickly be convinced, that we seek not only Theirs, but Them. For thus they, who had given in their Names to Christ, distinguished themselves upon all Occasions, in former and better Days. Every Christian Traveller was in some Sense an Apostle or Evangelist. They let no Opportunity slip, that was put into their Hands ; Nay, they sought many, with Peril of their Lives. If called by worldly Occasions, if cast on any Coast by Shipwrack, their first Care was, by their Instructions, by their Examples, by all manner of good Offices, to win the Natives to the Christian Faith. And, in regard the Islanders were, of all others, most intent upon maintaining a Correspondence of Traffick ; and indeed were the Persons most capable of visiting the most distant parts of the World ; it is plain, the early Conversion of the Isles to the Faith was a very wise Expedient, for readily conveying that *Pearl of great Price*, whithersoever these zealous Carriers should be called out, upon any of their worldly Occasions.

2. Another Observation I would make, from those Words in my Text, *They shall bring their Silver and their Gold with them, unto the Name of the Lord*. These are by Some Interpreters understood, as an Allusion to the immense Wealth, and other Materials of Value, imported for the Temple built by *Solomon* ; and to imply, that what the Merchants then did for Profit, and in the way of Trade, the Christian Merchants should contribute, by voluntary

ary Offerings, to the Support and Furtherance of the Gospel.

How amply this Prediction was made good all History declares. At first, by Men freely devoting their Substance to pious and charitable Uses. Hence that eager Zeal, which St. Paul commends in the *Galatians*, as ready, *if it had been possible, even to pluck out their own Eyes, and give them to their Apostle*: That cheerful Entertainment, which to any, who had *for-saken Houses or Lands, or Father or Friends, for their Master's sake*, restored *an hundred fold*, according to his Promise, *even in this Life*. Such was the Reception of Persons, sent by God to convert and instruct the Ignorant and Unbelieving; Such the generous Affection, and tender Concern, of Fellow-Sufferers in so good a Cause; who counted all this World's Wealth but *Dross and Dung*, in Comparison of that inestimable Treasure, the Knowledge of a Saviour, and the Hope of a blessed Immortality through Him.

This unbounded Openness of Heart was indeed peculiar to a Time, when the Distresses of the Church wanted it; and when the Authority of Teachers, who brought the undoubted Credential of Miracles along with them, might seem very reasonably to command it. But, even after those pressing Occasions ceased, and these miraculous Evidences of a Divine Mission were withdrawn; good Christians did not think themselves discharged, not even from large and noble Proportions of Bounty. For, when the Gospel was publicly countenanced, and Persons of the highest Elevation esteemed it their Honour, to profess themselves Disciples of the meek and lowly *Jesus*; They judged, and very rightly, that the Poverty of the Church is no essential Character of her Purity:
And,

And, by the Decent and Liberal Provision, of Houses set apart for Publick Worship, and of an honourable Maintenance for the Waiters at God's Altar, did quickly shew, that the Want of These, among Christians, is always a Calamity, sometimes a Reproach; Much to be lamented, Never to be chosen.

Such were the Sentiments of those good Times, when no Satisfaction was thought equal to that, of promoting the Glory, and extending the Borders, of Christ's Kingdom. This they look'd upon as a Trust, left upon the Hands of all, whom God enables to become instrumental to so necessary and pious a Design. A Design, not to be carried on, in the ordinary Course of Things, without the Assistance of many zealous, and very munificent Benefactions. And therefore Plenty of These flowed in continually; Testimonies of unfeigned Love to their Master, and dear Redeemer; Tributes paid back to the Almighty Giver of their *Carnal* Things; Grateful Acknowledgments of his Mercy, in imparting to them his infinitely better, and *Spiritual* Things; And Pledges of their Trust in that Righteousness of God, which never

Hebr. vi. forgets their Work and Labour of Love,
10. which is shewed toward His Name, by ministring to the Saints.

II. And thus I am led very naturally to the Second Part of my Discourse: Which, I told you, should be employed, in such an Application of the foregoing Particulars, as may answer the Duty I am now upon, and the Character of that Body, who have called me to it.

The very Being and Design of this Society tends to the more perfect Accomplishment of *Isaiah's* Prophecy in my Text; and the Part I would persuade my Hearers to bear in this Design, is That
of

of converting our Traffick and Navigation, into means of establishing the Christian Faith, among those yet barbarous People, with whom we deal abroad.

And, Ought I not to promise my self some Success in this Undertaking, from the Quality of the Persons, to whom I am now addressing? Were You, like those poor Ignorants, insensible of the Necessity of all Religion in general, or of the Excellency of the Christian Religion in particular; I might urge to you, the Value of Immortal Souls; the Wisdom of winning these to Virtue and Happiness; that the only Ordinary way of Doing this is, by bringing them to the Knowledge and Obedience of Christ and his Gospel: I might, in very moving Terms, represent the miserable Circumstances of many Millions of dark Wretches, on whom the Sun of Righteousness hath not yet shined; I ought to excite your Compassion, not to Them only, who sit in the Shadow of Death; but even to your Selves, at whose hands their Blood shall be required, in the Great Day of Account; so far as any uncharitable Neglect or Hard-heartedness of Yours shall be found accessary to their Destruction.

These, and several like Heads of Argument, might have been seasonable upon This Occasion; did I not find my self, upon a double Account, happily prevented in the Undertaking. First, by standing here, in the midst of a City, yielding perhaps to none, in Examples of useful and well-regulated Charity, both to the Bodies and the Souls of Men; and Then, by the Labours of better Hands, and those of superior Character too, who have pleaded this Cause of Christ, and his lost Sheep, before me. But since my Mite should be cast in also; suffer, I beseech you, the Word of Exhortation, while I remind you briefly, *First*, Of the

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the Obligations, and, *Secondly*, Of the Encouragements, you have, to turn your Thoughts and Contributions toward this good Work in particular. Under the Former of these Arguments, I will apply to you, as English Christians, and English Traders: Under the Latter, I shall shew, what happy Progress this pious Society hath already made; and what farther Successes may very reasonably be expected. For, why should we not expect the Continuance of that Divine Blessing, which hath hitherto so remarkably prospered us? Why not expect the Addition of that Help, which the Inhabitants of this wealthy and populous Place are so very capable of giving us?

Luke xii. 48. 1. I begin then with your Obligations to this Charity. *To whom Men have committed much, from Him they will ask the more*, is one of our Lord's Proverbial Sayings, whose Equity speaks it self.

Matt. xxv. 14, to 30. And, when we see that Maxim illustrated by the Parable of the Talents; the Inference is plainly This. *That every Ability of doing Good must be strictly accounted for; and, that They only have fairly discharged their Account, whose Improvements shall be found proportionate to the Prime Stock trusted in their hands.* Now, of all our Talents, as none can be more precious, so none, I take it, will be more enquired into, than the Purity and free Exercise of the Christian Religion. This moves me to intreat, that you would seriously reflect, how deeply you are indebted to God, as *English Christians*. * Our happy Island was, probably by the preaching of *St. Paul*, but undoubtedly in the time of the Apo-

* See Bp. Stillingfleet's Origin. Britan. pag. 39. Edit. Lond. 1684.

bles themselves, bless'd with the early Knowledge of the Gospel. To Us, belong the Honour of the † first Christian King, The first profession of the Truth countenanced and enjoyned by Laws and publick Authority, || The Birth of the first Christian Emperor, To Us, the shining of this glorious Light, never totally extinguished among us. And, when eclipsed with those Corruptions and Superstitions, which God, in his Judgment, permitted to over-spread the face of this *Western* World; We were again among the first, and far the best, Reformed; Purged from those Spots of Error, and rescued from that Yoke of *Romish* Tyranny, in which all Attempts to enslave us again have been defeated, by such distinguishing, and even wonderful, Providences; as cannot, without the basest Ingratitude, ever be forgotten.

But, Are such signal Favours remembred as they ought to be, unless our Gratitude expresses it self, in as uncommon Measures of Piety, and Charity, and Holy Labour, to plant this excellent Religion, where it is not yet; and to cherish and strengthen it, where it hath taken hitherto but weak and tender Root? Are we not excited to this, by that every Form, which directs us to pray, that *Our Father's Kingdom may come*? And, do we pray like sincere Christians, if our own Endeavours be wanting to attain the Blessing we implore? Nay, are we not provoked to these Endeavours, by the Example of Others? I say, provoked to them: For, shall Hereticks and Infidels labour Conversions to Irreligion and Falshood at home, and shall We be under no Concern, to propagate Truth and Virtue abroad? Shall a misguided Zeal, or a secular Inte-

† Lucius. See Stillington's Or. Brit. pag. 57.

|| Constantine the Great.

rest, compass Sea and Land, to make Profelytes to Christ's usurping pretended Vicar; and shall not We, who have all the Advantages of truly Primitive Doctrine, lay the Good of Souls, and the Enlargement of our Lord's Territories to Heart? Surely we do not deserve so bright a Candlestick; unless it be our Care so to advance it, that not They only, who are already in the House, but Those also, whose Unhappiness it is to be still without Doors, may be invited in, and see, and love, and walk by, the saving Light of it.

2. But this Obligation seems to be drawn yet closer, upon All, whose Fortunes are owing to any

Commerce with those Ignorants and Un-believers. For, may I not be allowed
 Rem. xv. 27. to turn *St. Paul's* Argument, and affirm upon this Occasion, that to Them, whose

Strength and Toil is consumed in the Service of your *Carnal* Things, Some Debt is contracted, Some Title thereby convey'd, to the *Spiritual* Advantages, they might receive from You? This were to act like generous Traders indeed; To barter Gold for Brass, and Pearl for Trifles; in returning the noblest and most useful Treasure, for Riches, which they knew not either the Use, or the Value of; To This, if I am rightly inform'd, some of your Characters have oblig'd you; and common Humanity would oblige you to it however. Slaves, it is true, they are, and Negroes; wild and untaught, exposed to common Sale, and wrought like Beasts of Burden. Their Bodies therefore are taken Care of for their Master's Sake; and is it not fit, their Souls should be taken Care of, for their own? Is it nothing to you, that they are created by the same God, formed of the same Flesh and Blood, descended from the same common Ancestor, endued with the same Souls, the same Capacities of immortal Happiness? Nay, which should touch us
 more

more tenderly than all the rest, They also are redeemed by the same Precious Ransom. Birth and Fortune, Climate and Complexion, Barbarism and Servitude, are only Circumstantial Differences; such as ought not to be made too great Reckoning of, when the Essential Parts continue the same. A good Man will find but too much Ground for Grief and Pity, but none at all for Neglect, Contempt, or inhuman Treatment, even in the meanest and most abject of his own *Species*. He will observe, with Holy Indignation, the wretched Degeneracy of Human Nature, when uncultivated and left to itself; and will be very solicitous to restore it to its due Honour. He will lament the uncontrolled Usurpation and Tyranny of the Prince of Darkness; and be zealous in making Reprisals for that God, whose kinder Providence hath not left Him, in the same forlorn Condition. And this is the true Light to view these Creatures in; that They, by whom You subsist, may not be suffered to perish; nor Your Salvation hazarded, by obstructing or not promoting Theirs, for whom the Son of God did not disdain to shed his Blood. Upon the whole therefore, you must pardon me, if I do not see, how Any, concerned in the Particular I am now upon, can be excused from bearing some part in the godly and glorious Design, for the more effectual Furtherance whereof we are here this Day assembled. And now, having said so much of the Obligations, I proceed, in the Last Place, to add somewhat concerning the Encouragements, which (praised be God) we all have, heartily to put our helping hand to it.

2. To propagate Christianity among the uncivilized *Indians*, hath been generally thought a good Work, rather fit to be commended and wished well to, than likely to be accomplished. Former attempts of this kind have made so poor a Progress,

gress, as might dishearten any Principles, less vigorous and resolute, than a Faith, *which against Hope believeth in Hope*; and a Charity, *which hopeth all things, and endureth all things*. The Difficulties, retarding our Success, are incredibly many and great. Some scarce possible to have been foreseen; and Divers not to be removed, but by long time, much pains, and patient prudence. Notwithstanding all which, I think it may truly be affirmed, that the Blessing, which God hath already given to our Endeavours, deserves to be most thankfully received, as a Pledge of future and far nobler Effects.

We do not indeed go about to amuse the World with pompous Accounts of Miracles wrought, and Multitudes converted in an Instant: Much better had it been for all, who desire to advance *the Truth as it is in Jesus*, if the boasted Zeal of that Church, which vainly challenges this Glory, had kept it self within a narrower Compass. That unexampled Avarice and Cruelty, which proselyted Men with Rapine and Violence, with Fire and Sword, and Tortures worse than Death, have left such Horrors on the Minds of that suffering People; that, although no Deductions were made (as large ones doubtless might be) from the Tale, given in by their fabulous Reporters; Nay, should we allow them in account, the very many, who when their own Men again, have renounced and detested those Professions, which Fear or Suffering had before extorted: Yet even thus, 'tis highly probable, the Numbers these false Apostles have prejudiced against the Christian Name, would far exceed those, whom they have proselyted to a sincere Love of it.

Besides these Aversions in the common People, the Heathen Powers have often been alarm'd with a just Jealousy of that busy Spirit, peculiar to an

Order

Order of Intrigue, who value themselves as Principals in these remote Conversions. Discoveries were quickly made, that, whatever became of that *to Jesus Christ*, Obedience to the See of Rome was very heartily intended. And much Countenance could not be expected from Governours, apprehensive, that their Subjects were to be instructed, in order to inflave them to a foreign Jurisdiction.

Add to all This, the Creature and Image-Worship they were taught ; The gaudy Rites and Poms, to which they were initiated ; The Condescensions and Accommodations made to the Pagan Idolatry ; So shamefully liberal, that it is no great Wonder, if a Scheme of Religion found ready Entertainment, which was thus prostituted to the Humours and Customs of a deluded People, thus modell'd upon the Plan of those very Sins and Corruptions, which it ought to have confuted, and utterly extirpated.

Mean while you plainly see, how every Circumstance adds to the Difficulty of Our Undertaking. Ours, who, as *we have not so learned*, so neither must we so teach Christ : Ours, who dare not *handle the Word of God deceitfully* ; but must be content with the unwelcome Task, of shewing this People the danger of their Ignorance, and the Absurdity of those Errors, in which they have been educated : Ours, lastly, who, though *we seek not theirs but Them*, and have no other View, but the Salvation of Souls ; shall yet find all our Labours doubled, by contending with those Prepossessions and Aversions, which are chargeable upon Those very Persons, who pique themselves upon being the most powerful Labourers in our Lord's Vineyard, while they corrupt the Native Simplicity of his Gospel.

And yet, before even These things could be entered upon with Strangers, Nature, as well as Religion, obliged us to begin with the necessary Care, due to our Own People. For, of our Own too, vast Numbers long had lived, as Sheep without a Shepherd. Large Tracts of Land, and many populous Places, were wholly destitute of Preachers, Sacraments, or any Publick Worship. Here therefore, in order to proceed regularly, our Society made their first Efforts. Here Churches have been erected, Congregations formed, Ministers settled, great Quantities of useful Books distributed, Parochial Libraries fixed, Charity-Schools maintained, Children, Servants, and Slaves catechized; and a new face of Religion introduced all over our Plantations. Of these Successful Advances, a good part is owing to the pious Disposition of the People, Much to the Encouragement of their Governours, More to the laudable Industry, unwearied Zeal, and prudent Conduct, of able and faithful Missionaries; Most of all, to the liberal Contributions, the wise Counsels, the fatherly Care, of this venerable Corporation. It is not indeed in the Power of human Wisdom, to take greater Precautions than they have done, not to be deceived in the Characters of the Labourers, sent forth into this Harvest. And they feel the unspeakable Satisfaction of knowing, by happy Experience, that they have seldom (very seldom, in Comparison, and all Circumstances considered,) mistaken their Men.

In promoting this Excellent Design, no Expence hath been spared; and Their Zeal hath provoked very Many, to assist them in these Difficulties. The Fruits of their Charity are already so visible, as to draw other Countries to an Imitation of it; And Persons, of eminent Figure abroad, have justly esteemed it an Honour, to become
Members

Members of this Body, and to bear a part in the glorious Undertaking.

Were these Examples followed so well as they might be at home, particularly in this Wealthy and populous City; Were the Lives of our Brethren abroad so regular and sober, their Dealings so just and disinterested, their Treatment and Behaviour so courteous and humane, as by their Conversations to win the Hearts of those Infidels, whom their Ministers convince; What Consequences might we not rationally promise our Selves, from such Beginnings, and such Instruments? And why may we not promise our selves an Addition of Help at Home, when God hath given his People the long wanted Blessing of Peace? Why not a large Increase of Knowledge in the Natives of those very Countries; when the Improvement of a generous Benefactor's Col. Charity, shall, as we hope it shortly *Col. Co-drington.* will, bring to them the Advantages of a Learned Education; by settling a College in one of these Plantations, which may nurse up, and send forth, Numbers of able and faithful Ministers to assist in this Blessed Work?

Why, *lastly*, may we not enjoy the Comfortable Presages, of a general Encouragement to Piety and Virtue, and an effectual Regulation of Manners and Discipline, when the truly primitive Form of Episcopal Authority shall be there established, upon the Plan of our own *English* Apostolick Church? A noble and most useful Design, fit to crown all the Rest; Which hath been long under the Consideration of this venerable Body, and is much at the Heart of that pious and bountiful Princess, who *above all Things seeks, and delights in, His Honour and Glory, whose Minister* *he is.*

22 *A Sermon preach'd before the Society for the*

This Account I thought seasonable to be laid before you, that no Suspicion of an impracticable Undertaking might cool any Man's Zeal for promoting it. Much might be added to the same good Purpose; but, having exceeded a great deal already, I choose rather to conclude with St. Paul's Benediction, upon a like Charitable Account:

Now He, that ministrerh Seed to the
2 Cor. ix. *Sower, both minister Bread for your Food*
10, 11. *and multiply your Seed sown, and increaseth*
the Fruits of your Righteousness: Being enriched in every Thing to all Bountifulness, which causeth through us Thanksgiving unto God,



FINIS.

